Cutting Sheets of “Eight By Ten” Inch Photo Paper
To Fit “Four by Five” Film Holders

By - James R. Kyle, Photographer

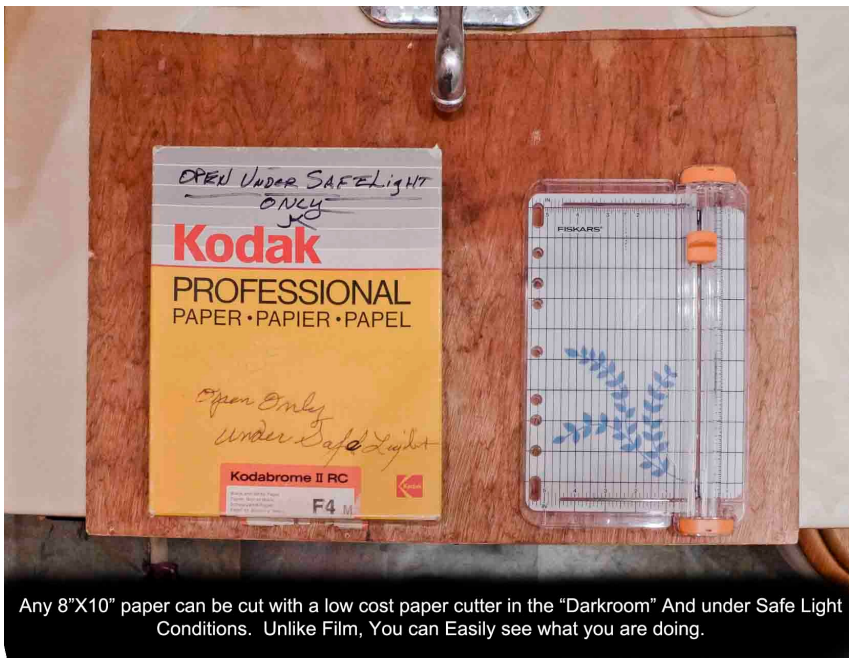
Some people, even veteran photographers, do not realize that a sheet of 8"X10" photographic print paper will not fit into some 8"X10" holders. A few of the older holders YES, the newer ones, NO, at least not that I have experienced, at any rate. Also - when cutting the sheets into smaller 4"X5" pieces to use in a 4X5 holder, one of them, must be “re-cut” to fit properly. If not, that 4X5 sheet will not go into the holder. Forcing it will only buckle that sheet and you will not even get the “Dark Slide” to go into the holder. I do not know what other Paper Negative photographers do - However, there is what I do.

This procedure must be done in a Darkroom With a Safety Light. I use the “guest bathroom” for my photographic “darkroom”. Items needed are:

1-
A paper cutter. (One that has a good clearly visible measurement scale. (I got mine, a small plastic one, at a “art & craft” store for under 30 dollars.) ((And some extra sliding blades.))
2-
Your choice of 8X10 photographic print paper.
3-
Rubber Gloves - (As NOT to scratch the emulsion of the paper.) – That’s about it.

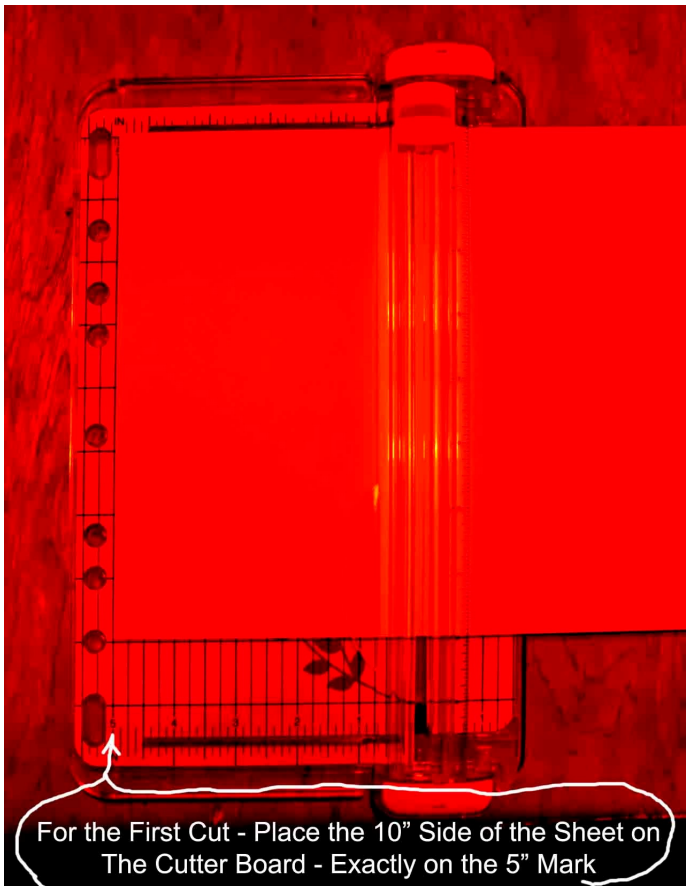
It is a good idea to get yourself comfortable with a chair at your darkroom work-table.

The paper cutter that I am currently using.



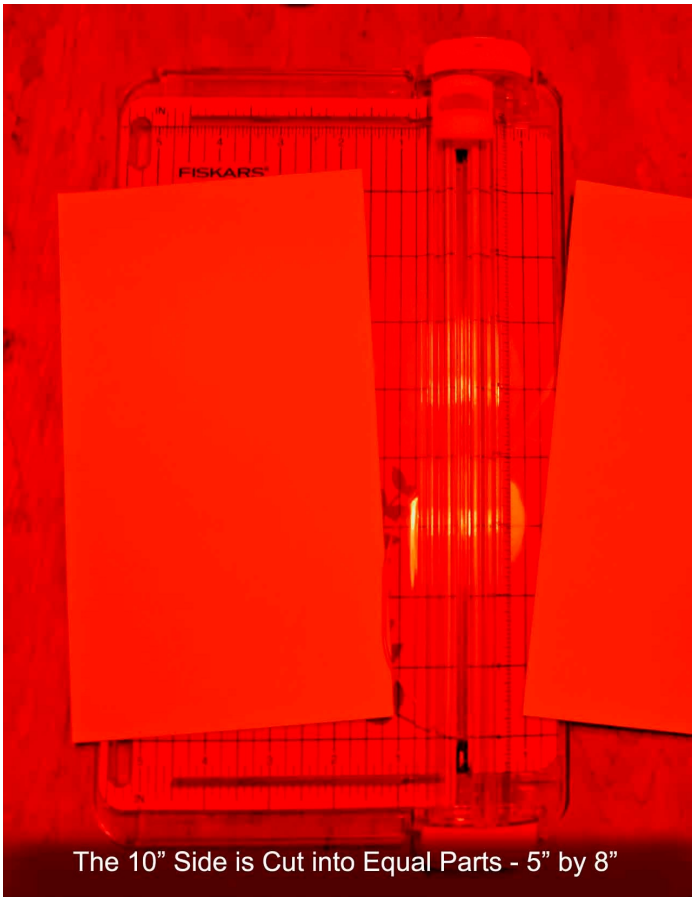
Any 8”X10” paper can be cut with a low cost paper cutter in the “Darkroom” And under Safe Light Conditions. Unlike Film, You can Easily see what you are doing.

With the SAFE LIGHT ON - And get comfortable
Open the box of Paper.



For the First Cut - Place the 10” Side of the Sheet on
The Cutter Board - Exactly on the 5” Mark

Get setup and comfortable at your work place, and turn on the Safe Light. Open the paper that you wish to cut and load. (It is a good idea to have on hand, a empty film holder, in order to check the fits of the paper after cutting. You may wish to do this each time, if the holders are not equal. Or until you become comfortable with the cutting.



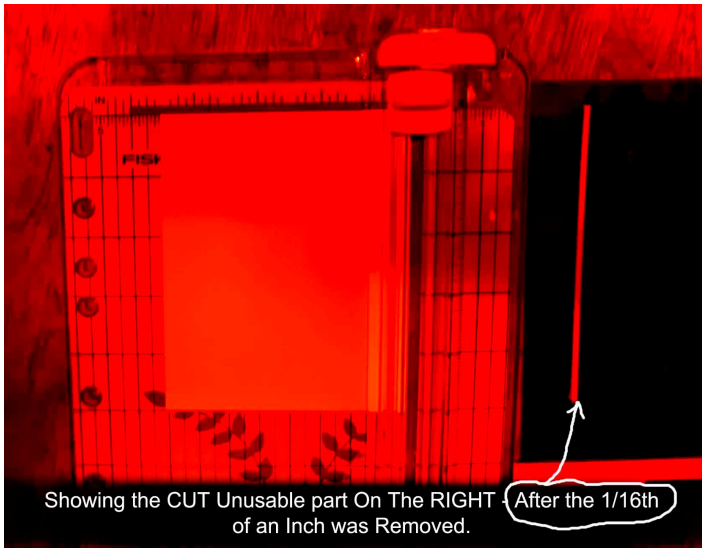
The 10” Side is Cut into Equal Parts - 5” by 8”

Take the paper and lay it emulsion side UP on the “cutting board”. Make sure that you cut the Ten (10 Inch side FIRST.

Aline the Left edge of the paper to the Five (5) inch mark - To the LEFT of the cutting blade. Make the cut with one smooth action. (Note > I have done two sheets of paper at one time - However - this tends to leave a bit of a ragged edge.) If you do detect a ragged edge - replace your “sliding”cutting blade.

After you have made this first cut from the 10" side of the paper, turn the paper 90 degrees and align the Left edge with the Four (4) inch mark on the table. Make this “second cut” just on the line of the four inch mark, and lay it aside. The other sheet part of the will have to be RE-CUT. I do not know how this happens, it just does. Make SURE that you only remove 1/16th of an inch.

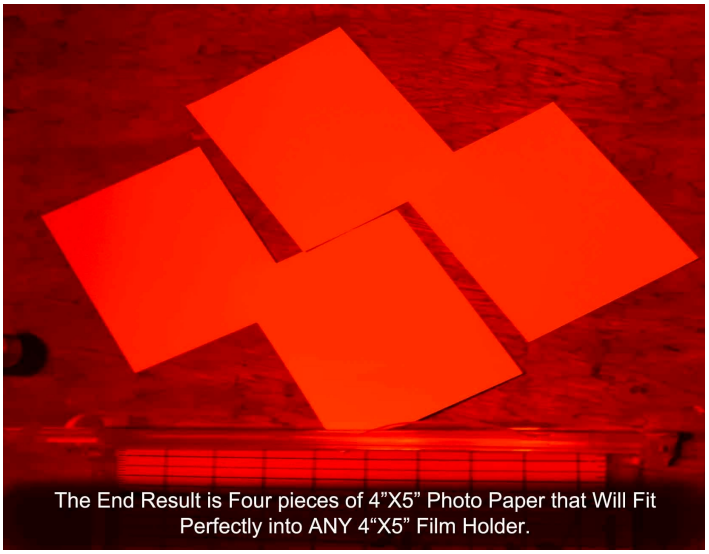
Cutting the FIRST 4”X5” piece - Make SURE you place the paper on The 4” Mark EXACTLY.



Showing the CUT Unusable part On The RIGHT - After the 1/16th of an Inch was Removed.

After this trimming of the 1/16th off the second 4X5 piece, place the two final cut pieces to the right and take the other 5"X8" half and do the same. When you have complete the desired amount of 4X5 sheets, place them in a “Light-Tight” container for safe keeping. I have several black plastic bags from papers I have used in the past that now the use is for the keeping of cut paper in a used paper box. (I have taped the edge corners with Black opaque “gaffer’s tape”.) ((What would we as photographers do without this versatile tape?)) = Sometimes I have wrapped the cut 4X5 ready to use papers in aluminum foil to further keep out the light from spoiling the emulsion.

Make SURE The EVERY Cut FITS Into the Film Holder.


The End Result is Four pieces of 4”X5” Photo Paper that Will Fit Perfectly into ANY 4“X5” Film Holder.

If you are new to doing this, it is advisable to have an empty film holder handy to check the fits of the paper to the little guides that are within the holder.

In that I have been doing this for over six years, I cut and re-load my holders after I develop and when the negatives are in the fixer, as that takes about 20 to 30 minutes. So - With nothing to do, I reload my holders with cut papers. (NOTE > It is a very good idea to keep the paper cutter at hand as you just might have missed a few of the trimming of the 1/16 of an inch from that other 4X5 paper. (I know I have, for sure.))

After cutting and wrapping the photo paper in the aluminum foil, I write on a label as to what sort of paper is inside. (Do NOT use RED INK.) A Black “Sharpie” works good for this. I mark the make and type of paper that is held inside each package. Along with the expiration date, the ISO I have figured for that type of paper, and the Developer that works best - from past experiences in use of it. I use to cut a lot of paper at one time - Now - I only cut to fill the empty film holders used for a days shooting.

Reading this over it does seem a little confusing - however, I do think that you can understand as to what I am doing with the cutting of photographic paper.

Thank you for reading.

James R. Kyle
PHOTOGRAPHY

James R. Kyle, Photographer - Saint Louis, Missouri, U.S.A. April, 2020

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